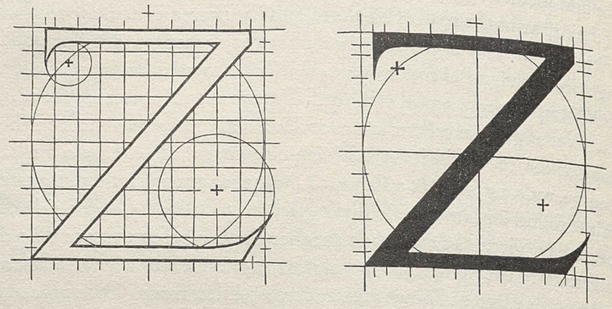

THE letter Zeta here drawn, and made from the I alone, is at the bottom as broad as it is high, & at the top its breadth is eight units and two halves only, and it requires only two turns of the compass, for which I have marked the centres upon which to place the point of the said compass.

IN his second book, *De Homine Interiori,* Galeotus Martius says: *Zeta non est litera, sed duplex sibilus; id est, duplex* SS *et hoc ejus figura bis intorta indicat**: 'Zeta is not a letter, but is a double hissing sound which is equivalent to two S's, as its shape, requiring two turns of the compass, shows.' Zeta, in truth, is not a Latin but a Greek letter, although the Latins have appropriated it as they have the Ypsilon, to write words derived from the Greek, which they have taken into their language; witness Priscian whom I have quoted hereinbefore where I treat of the said Ypsilon, when he says: *Ypsilon et Zeta tantummodo ponuntur in Græcis dictionibus.*† Zeta is said to have the force of a double letter, as X has; witness the said Priscian at the end of his first book and also a little farther on. It was used by the ancient Latins for two S's and for S & D, and as he says: *Zeta vero pro* SS *conjunctis accipitur, vel pro* S *et* D; *ut Massa pro* Μαζα *et Medentius pro* Μεζεντιος; and a little before the end of the first book and the passage quoted: *Quin etiam* S *simplex habet aliquam cum supra dictis cognationem, unde sæpe pro Zeta eam solemus geminatam ponere. Ut Patrisso pro* Πατρίζω, *Massa pro* Μαζα.‡ That is to say: 'And similarly S has some affinity & connection with the above-mentioned letters X & Zeta, for which reason often our custom is to double the said S for Zeta, as in the words *Patrisso* for Πατρίζω and *Massa* for

* *See note on page* 84. *The same work is cited also on pages* 116, 122, 147.

† I, VIII, 49.

‡ I, VI, 31.

Maza, Martianus Capella does not say whether it is a Latin or Greek letter, nor does he teach how it should be pronounced, except that he says simply that Appius Claudius held it in detestation because, when it is pronounced, it resembles the teeth of a dead man, who usually has his teeth all awry. This is what he says: *Zeta vero iccirco Appius Claudius detestatur quod dentes mortui dum exprimitur, imitatur.* It should be pronounced as if one wished to utter S and D, or two S's, which rule seems to be well observed at Bourges, where when they wish to pronounce it, they say *Esd,* and come very near the ancients, who instead of saying *Gaza,* pronounced and very often wrote *Gasda.* Celius Rhodiginus, in the XVIII chapter of book VII of his Ancient Lessons, writes that Zeta is not only the name of a letter, but signifies the seat of the judges and masters of the Chamber of Accounts in the old days in Athens, when he says: *Sicut Zeta dici valet locus in quo Zetetæ obuersantur, erant enim eo nomine Athenis Magistratus quidam ad quos referebantur qui Reip. aliquid deberent, nec soluerent.** That is to say: 'Zeta signifies the place where the masters and judges of the public revenue formerly sat in Athens, before whom those persons were summoned and compelled to come who were in arrears and did not pay in full.'

* *The proper reference is Chapter* XXVII, *not* XVIII.

SO then, on this subject, I can say that the worthy ancient fathers covertly and purposely placed this as the last letter in alphabetical order, to indicate that those who are perfectly accomplished & learned in well-made letters are inspectors and sovereign judges of the revenue and of the knowledge of the seven Liberal Arts & of the nine Muses, without knowledge of whom man can be neither learned nor perfect. And to show before your eyes and very clearly that this noble letter Zeta is so well-proportioned that it contains within itself every token of perfection, I have so drawn it below that the seven Liberal Arts and the nine Muses with their Apollo are placed therein in such marvellous proportion and disposition that you can plainly understand that the means which I have used to make and design all our preceding Attic letters is more reasonable and better advised than that of those who choose to make them of seven or eight or nine units of height only and not of ten, as you have seen and understood that I have done throughout all that has gone before.

GEOFROY TORY *Champ Fleury* GEORGE B. IVES, TRANSLATOR NEW YORK, 1927 THE LESSING J. ROSENWALD COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS Octavo